

M A R Y L A N D

Department of Disabilities

Kristen Cox, *Secretary*
Diane McComb, *Deputy Secretary*

Robert L. Ehrlich, Jr., *Governor*
Michael S. Steele, *Lt. Governor*

217 East Redwood Street, Suite 1300
Baltimore, Maryland 21202
410-767-3660 voice/tty ~ 1-800-637-4113 voice/tty
410-333-6674 fax ~ mdod@mdod.state.md.us

October 1, 2004

Boyd K. Rutherford, Secretary
Department of General Services
301 West Preston Street
Baltimore, MD 21201

Kristen Cox, Secretary
Department of Disabilities
217 East Redwood Street, Suite 1300
Baltimore, MD 21202

Dear Secretary Rutherford and Secretary Cox:

The task force established at your direction is pleased to present its recommendations regarding the state of Maryland's procurement preferences. These recommendations follow six months of deliberation and study of current programs in an effort to create employment and training opportunities that are more in keeping with contemporary values and expectations regarding people with disabilities. Attached is a list of comments received from interested parties that the Task Force gave consideration to in finalizing the recommendations.

We emphasize that while significant modification is being recommended to the existing program, it is not our intention to limit the training currently benefiting people with significant disabilities under the current set-aside practices. Rather, it is our hope that expanded opportunities will become available to reach a greater number of individuals including small businesses owned and operated by people with disabilities, as well as settings that enable greater integration of people with disabilities into the competitive workforce.

As Maryland moves forward with its reform of this program, task force members have a strong interest in providing input in the development of an initial implementation plan. Additionally, they want to continue to work with the Departments to develop long-term performance objectives that will ensure the successful implementation of these recommendations.

Independence ♦ Empowerment ♦ Quality of Life

Please don't hesitate to contact either of us if you have questions. We look forward to the continued collaboration between our Departments.

Sincerely,

Jade Gingerich
Chair

Anne Hubbard
Chair